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KREMLIN CALLS AGCA CHARGES PROPAGANDA

The Kremlin on Saturday denied Mehmet Ali Agca's claims that KGB agents trained him to attack the pope, calling the charges "threadbare propaganda" and "nothing more than absurd insinuations."

Bulgaria also denied Agca's accusations that its agents were involved.

The Soviet news agency Tass said Italian investigation of previous allegations of Bulgarian involvement "has shown that there are absolutely no facts to bear out, directly or indirectly, the socialist countries' complicity in the heinous crime."

Tass accused Western news agencies of playing into the hands of "ideological saboteurs" who "need this (reports of Agca's charges) to prevent world public attention from focusing on the true organizers and inspirers of acts of terrorism, who are closely linked with neo-fascist circles and the American CIA which, as has been proved conclusively, has sponsored the fabrication about socialist countries' complicity in the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II."

Agca made the claim in Rome Friday while being returned to prison, where he is serving a life sentence for the May 13, 1981 attack.

The Soviet Union came under suspicion last November with the arrest of Sergei Antonov, the Rome chief of the Bulgarian state airline. Antonov was taken into custody apparently on information given authorities by Agca.

Antonov, two other Bulgarians and four Turks have been implicated in the attack on the pope.

The Bulgarian news agency BTA said Saturday, "There is nothing new in the slanders publicly repeated. . . by Ali Agca. Our position on these absurd and groundless accusations, which are used by certain forces to fan up the anti-Bulgarian campaign and serve as a pretext to keep the innocent Bulgarian citizen Sergei Antonov imprisoned, is well known."